

Washington, DC -- Today, Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-07) spoke with FAA Administrator Marion Blakey to again review and emphasize the impact of the FAA's proposed airspace redesign on Delaware County's citizens, including their safety, health, education, and property values.

Their discussion – which was set up by Subcommittee on Aviation Chairman Jerry Costello after Joe brought him up to Delaware County to meet with local officials and Joe's Expert Advisory Board in which the Chairman noted that it was the best presentation he had seen in 18 years – was one in which Joe Sestak laid out what needs to be done to fully mitigate any impact on the safety, health, education and property values of his constituents. In office only 82 days – during which time he established and met with his advisory board of local and national aviation experts nine times (including meeting with the FAA several times), and held two summits/hearings on the issue in the district – Joe laid out that the airspace redesign process needs to be delayed until all concerns are addressed even though the Administrator noted that the process has been going on 10 years. She added, however, that it was good to have recently received input on the federal level, including from Chairman Costello and Joe Sestak.

In talking with Administrator, Joe went over the inadequate models of the FAA process and presented the statistical analysis to support the noise, air quality, ground safety, and cumulative effects on his constituents that had not been accounted for. He discussed the option of litigation, informing the Administrator it was an option if the process was not delayed to take account of the issues Joe raised and to have them fully mitigated. Joe stressed it was better to delay the process for a shorter period of time and find a way to fully mitigate the issues, rather than the lengthier delay of litigation, recognizing that the FAA eventually won 12 of the 13 cases litigated against it in recent history (in the one case in which the FAA lost, it was due to the FAA not following the process as required by the law). Joe told the Administrator that he would not rule out litigation if the process could not be delayed.

In response, Administrator Blakey agreed to a meeting the week of April 16 with Joe, Chairman Costello, the Expert Advisory Board, and other Members of Congress, including Congressman Rob Andrews, to discuss the concerns and the option of delaying the process.

In the meantime, Joe is working with Congressman Rob Andrews (D-NJ), whose own district will be impacted by planes now being redirected over his own district on their landing approach, to develop legislation – perhaps in the FAA Reauthorization Bill – to ensure the process does address both of their concerns on the FAA's proposed airspace redesign on their citizens' safety, health, education, and property values.

Although Joe has been in office for only 80 days, he has made this his number one local issue. To date, he has done the following:

- On December 14th, Joe held the first meeting of his FAA Expert Advisory Board.
- On December 19th, Joe was briefed by FAA Airspace Manager Steve Kelley.
- On December 28th, Joe held a follow-up meeting/report status with his FAA Expert Advisory Board.
- On January 17th, Joe held a conference call/report status with FAA Expert Advisory Board.
- On January 21st, Joe convened a meeting between the FAA Expert Advisory Board and FAA Airspace Manager Steve Kelley.
- On January 22d, Joe spoke to the Subcommittee on Aviation Chairman Jerry Costello about the FAA redesign.
- On January 24th, Joe met with Deputy Secretary of Transportation Maria Cino to discuss the FAA Airspace Redesign and Capacity Enhancement.
- On February 6, Joe spoke to Steve Kelley and his FAA Expert Advisory Board about the FAA Town Hall Event on Friday, February 9 in Ridley Township.
- On February 9th, Joe held a town hall, which allowed community residents to ask questions and express their concerns directly to the FAA Airspace Manager.
- On March 12, Joe brought the Subcommittee on Aviation Chairman Jerry Costello up to Delaware County to meet with local officials and Joe's Expert Advisory Board to discuss the impact of the FAA's proposed redesign and airport expansion on Delaware County.

*Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "DeepBlue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the U.S. House of Representatives.*

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